



Birds of
Arikok

Page 4

Aruba's ONLY English newspaper

The 71st Carnaval season is in full swing!



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LIVE ENTERTAINMENT 7 DAYS A WEEK

PROFESSIONAL COMPLIMENTARY
PICTURES ON TUESDAY AND FRIDAY

SUNDAY:
MARRYBELL MADURO
SINGER
6:30 - 8:30pm

MONDAY:
ANGELA FLORES
VIOLINIST
6:30 - 8:30pm

TUESDAY:
JEAN PAUL
SAXOPHONIST
6:30 - 8:30pm

WEDNESDAY:
EDDIE KROON
SINGER 4:00 - 6:00pm

MAILLEYN ALVARADO
VIOLINIST 6:30 - 8:30pm

KARAOKE 9:00 - 11:00pm

THURSDAY:
MARRYBELL MADURO
SINGER
6:30 - 8:30pm

FRIDAY:
RICKY THOMAS
GUITARIST
7:00 - 9:00pm

SATURDAY:
EDDIE KROON
SINGER
4:00 - 6:00pm

ANGELA FLORES
VIOLINIST
6:30 - 8:30pm

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Higher Social Security payments coming for millions of people from bill that Biden is signing

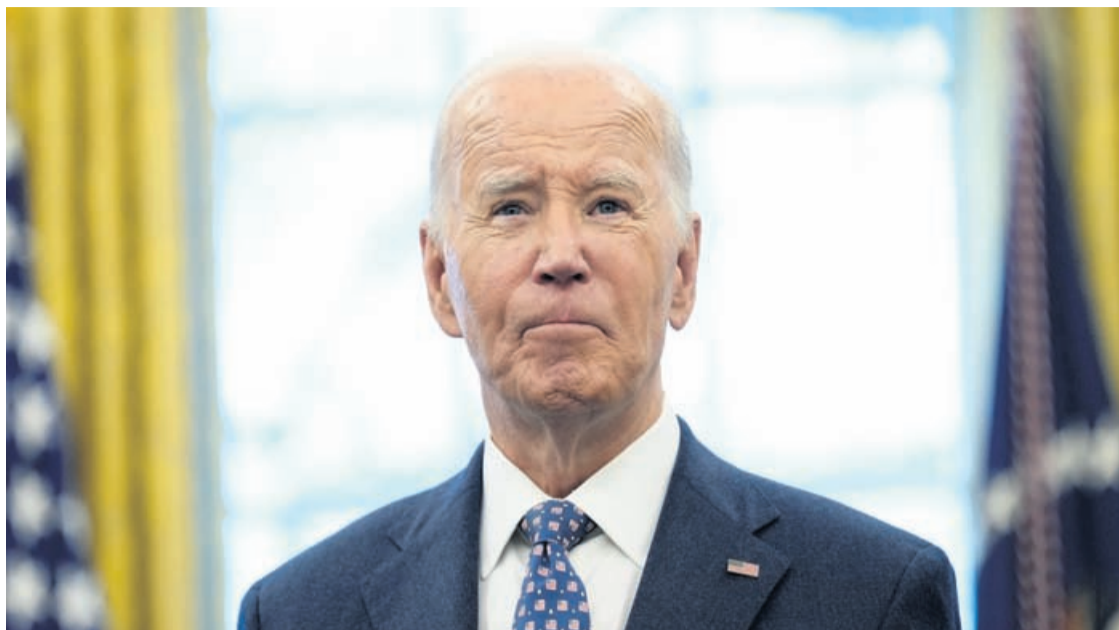
By **FATIMA HUSSEIN**

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden on Sunday plans to sign into law a measure that boosts Social Security payments for current and former public employees, affecting nearly 3 million people who receive pensions from their time as teachers, firefighters, police officers and in other public service jobs.

Advocates say the Social Security Fairness Act rights a decades-old disparity, though it will also put strain on Social Security Trust Funds, which face a looming insolvency crisis.

The bill rescinds two provisions — the Windfall Elimination Provision and the Government Pension Off-



President Joe Biden pauses during a photo opportunity with Medal of Valor recipients in the Oval Office of the White House in Washington, Friday, Jan. 3, 2025.

set — that limit Social Security benefits for recipients if they get retirement payments from other sources,

including public retirement programs from a state or local government. The Congressional Re-

search Service estimated that in December 2023, there were 745,679 people, about 1% of all Social Security beneficiaries, who had their benefits reduced by the Government Pension Offset. About 2.1 million people, or about 3% of all beneficiaries, were affected by the Windfall Elimination Provision.

The Congressional Budget Office estimated in September that eliminating the Windfall Elimination Provision would boost monthly payments to the affected beneficiaries by an average of \$360 by December 2025. Ending the Government Pension Offset would increase monthly benefits in December 2025 by an average of \$700 for 380,000 recipients getting benefits based on living spouses, according to the CBO. The increase would be an average of \$1,190 for 390,000 or surviving spouses getting a widow or widower benefit. Those amounts would increase over time with Social Security's regular cost-of-living adjustments.

The change is to payments from January 2024 and beyond, meaning the Social Security Administration would owe back-dated payments. The measure as passed by Congress says the Social Security commissioner "shall adjust primary insurance amounts to the extent necessary to take into account" changes in the law. It's not imme-

diately clear how this will happen or whether people affected will have to take any action.

Edward Kelly, president of the International Association of Fire Fighters, said firefighters across the country are "excited to see the change — we've righted a 40-year wrong." Kelly said the policy was "far more egregious for surviving spouses of firefighters who paid their own quotas into Social Security but were victimized by the government pension system."

The IAFF has roughly 320,000 members, which does not include hundreds of thousands of retirees who will benefit from the change.

"Now firefighters who get paid very little can now afford to actually retire," Kelly said.

Sherrod Brown, who as an Ohio senator pushed for the proposal for years, lost his reelection bid in November. Lee Saunders, president of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees labor union, thanked Brown for his advocacy.

"Over two million public service workers will finally be able to access the Social Security benefits they spent their careers paying into," Saunders said in a statement. "Many will finally be able to enjoy retirement after a lifetime of service."

National Education Association President Becky Pringle said the law is "a historic victory that will improve the lives of educators, first responders, postal workers and others who dedicate their lives to public service in their communities."

And while some Republicans such as Maine Sen. Susan Collins supported the legislation, others, including Sens. John Thune of South Dakota, Rand Paul of Kentucky and Thom Tillis of North Carolina, voted against it. "We caved to the pressure of the moment instead of doing this on a sustainable basis," Tillis told The Associated Press last month. □

Live Entertainment at 8PM

<p>MON Latin Dance Show</p>	<p>TUE Steelpan Music</p>
<p>WED Cultural Dance Show</p>	<p>THU Acrobatic Show</p>
<p>SUN Violin Show</p>	<p>Nightly Watershow 7:30pm - 8:30pm - 9:30pm</p>

Stores are open from Mon to Sat 10am to 10pm and Sun 5pm to 10pm

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Myanmar releases thousands of prisoners to mark Independence Day

BANGKOK (AP) — Myanmar's military government has released more than 6,000 prisoners and has reduced other inmates' sentences as part of a mass amnesty marking the 77th anniversary of independence from Britain on Saturday.

They included just a small proportion of hundreds of political detainees jailed for opposing army rule since the military seized power in February 2021 from the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi. That takeover was met with massive nonviolent resistance, which has since become a widespread armed struggle.

State-run MRTV television reported that Senior Gen. Min Aung Hlaing, the head of the military government, granted amnesties covering 5,864 prisoners from Myanmar, as well as 180 foreigners who will be deported. Mass prisoner releases are common on holidays and other significant occasions in Myanmar.

The terms of release warn that if the freed detainees violate the law again, they will have to serve the remainder of their original sentences in addition to



Released prisoners are welcomed by family members and colleagues outside Insein Prison Saturday, Jan. 4, 2025, in Yangon, Myanmar.

any new sentence.

In a separate report, it said Min Aung Hlaing had commuted the life sentences of 144 prisoners to 15 years' imprisonment. The report provided no details about them.

The report also said that all other prisoners will have their sentences reduced by one sixth, except those convicted under the Explosive Substances Act, the Unlawful Associations Act, the Arms Act and the

Counterterrorism Law, all laws which are often used against opponents of military rule.

Maj. Gen. Zaw Min Tun, the spokesperson for the military government, said in an audio note to journalists that those being released included about 600 prisoners who were prosecuted under Section 505(A) of Myanmar's penal code, which makes it a crime to spread comments that create public unrest or fear or

spread false news.

He said Khet Aung, a former chief minister of the southern Kachin state, was among those freed. Khet Aung was arrested soon after the army takeover and was sentenced in April 2022 to 12 years in prison on corruption charges.

Zaw Min Tun also said most of the freed foreigners are Thais who were arrested for gambling in the border town of Tachileik in eastern Myanmar. He said Indone-

sians who were arrested for fishing in Myanmar's territorial waters were also among those freed.

He did not mention whether four Thai fishermen, who were arrested by Myanmar's navy in late November after patrol boats opened fire on Thai fishing vessels in waters close to their maritime border in the Andaman Sea, were among the released. Thailand's prime minister had said she expects the four to be released on Independence Day.

Prisoner releases began on Saturday but can take a few days to be completed. In the country's largest city, Yangon, buses took prisoners out of Insein Prison, where friends and families of detainees had waited since morning for the announced releases, at around 11:30 a.m.

There was no sign that the prisoner release would include Aung San Suu Kyi, who has been held virtually incommunicado by the military since its seizure of power.

The 79-year-old Suu Kyi is serving a 27-year sentence after being convicted in a series of politically tinged prosecutions brought. □

Venezuela doubles down on intention to arrest opposition leader who claims he defeated Maduro

CARACAS, Venezuela (AP) — Venezuela's government Sunday doubled down on its intention to arrest the opposition leader who claims he defeated President Nicolás Maduro in last year's election in the form of a threat from the ruling party-controlled congress.

Without mentioning Edmundo González's name, National Assembly leader Jorge Rodríguez said the unicameral body would order the immediate arrest of the retired diplomat should he step on Venezuelan soil. The threat follows the government's recent announcement of a \$100,000 reward for information on González's whereabouts and comes less than a week before Venezuela's next



Venezuela's opposition leader Edmundo Gonzalez Urrutia, left, waves to supporters beside Uruguayan President Luis Lacalle Pou outside the government residence in Montevideo, Uruguay, Saturday, Jan. 4, 2025.

Associated Press

presidential term is set to begin.

González left Venezuela for exile in Spain in September after a judge issued a warrant for his arrest in connection

with an election-related investigation. In recent weeks, he has vowed to travel to Venezuela to be sworn in for the presidential term which, by law, must begin Jan. 10, but he has

not explained how he plans to return or wrest power from Maduro, whose party controls all institutions and the military.

"That unworthy being ... has been saying that he is going to return to the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela," Rodríguez said shortly after he was re-elected as the National Assembly's president. "Each and every deputy who defends peace will request, if he touches a bit of land of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, his immediate arrest."

González began a tour of the Americas with stops in Argentina and Uruguay on Saturday, when he told reporters he would travel to the United States next and hoped to speak with President Joe Biden.

He said he also planned to visit Panama and the Dominican Republic.

Meanwhile, Maduro already received an invitation from the National Assembly to be sworn in for a third term Friday, more than five months after the country's National Electoral Council, stacked with ruling-party loyalists, declared him winner of the July 28 election.

Unlike previous presidential elections, electoral authorities did not provide detailed vote counts. Yet, the opposition collected tally sheets from more than 80% of the nation's electronic voting machines, posted them online and said they showed González had won the election with twice as many votes as Maduro. □



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Aruba's Nature is to be Cherished

ST. CRUZ — The national park Arikok comprises almost 18 % of the island. Its rugged terrain, desert-like hills filled with tall cacti, breathtaking coastline and protected local flora and fauna welcome you to be explored. There is numerous wildlife to discover like for example the sea turtle who lays his eggs on the park's beaches. There are more places on the island that are a preserved area like the Bubali Plas which is a bird sanctuary. The national park Arikok takes you on a memorable journey of the islands past offering unique geological, cultural and historical sites. These can all be enjoyed and explored



either on your own or during guided tours. A wide variety of educational and informative programs and fun activities is available. Did you know that four of the in total seven species of sea turtle lay their eggs on Aruba's beaches? In the national park, a Least Tern (*Sterna antillarum*) keeps a strict eye on a very special event taking place below on the beach: a majestic Leatherback (*Dermochelys coriacea*) heads back to sea after laying her eggs, while another nest laid 2

months ago by the same female hatches. A very rare occurrence of daytime nesting and hatching. Sea turtles prefer nesting in the cool and dark hours of the night. And hatchlings usually wait for the cue of cooling surface sand before emerging. Bubali Magic This beautiful close-up image of the pink bird is courtesy of Michiel Oversteegen of the Aruba Birdlife Conservation. This important foundation showcases and builds

awareness of Aruba's birds and other native flora and fauna. You may have seen a 'pink cloud' lately at the Bubali or Spanish Lagoon Wetlands areas? It's most likely to be Roseate Spoonbills (*Ajaia ajaja*) or 'Chucharon Cora' as they are known in Papiamentu. This unusual looking bird forages in shallow muddy water while sweeping its flattened bill from side to side to catch small fish, crustaceans and other aquatic invertebrates. The Roseate Spoonbill remains an uncommon sight as they are vulnerable to degradation of feeding and nesting habitats (Wetlands). (Source: arikok national park) The aforementioned is just a part of what Aruba's nature has to offer. We cannot stress enough to go, see for yourself. The island has the most beautiful beaches but it is also worthwhile to go beyond this and get an



idea of our entire island. Lately there is a discussion going on about the effect certain activities have on our nature, for example the ATV vehicles cause a lot of dust, noise and leave tire tracks. Animals live in these areas where the vehicles run, often with high speed and with detrimental consequences to flora and fauna. Motorized vehicles are forbidden to drive on the sand dunes in the Northern part of the island and all beaches in Aruba are forbidden for any motorized vehicle. Treasure our island to enjoy it like you do: as a tropical and natural paradise. We truly appreciate it!

Aruba Tourism Authority honored loyal visitors at Costa Linda Beach Resort

The Aruba Tourism Authority recently had the great pleasure of recognizing-Goodwill Ambassadors of Aruba. Thehonoreeswere respectively honored with a certificate for theiryears of visits, loyalty, and love for the island of Aruba.

The honorary certification is presented on behalf of the Minister of Tourism as a token of appreciation and to say "Masha Danki" to guests who have visited Aruba 10, 20, or 35 years or more consecutively.

The threelevels of honor are as follows:

Distinguished Visitor (10>years consecutively visiting Aruba)

Goodwill Ambassador (20>years consecutively visiting Aruba)
Emerald Ambassador (35>years consecutively visiting Aruba)

The honorees were:

Distinguished Visitors
Mr. Dave & Mrs. Adrienne Mc Gillfrom Sun City,Arizona, United States.

Mrs. Marouska Heyliger,representing the Aruba Tourism Authority, and staff members of Costa Linda Beach Resort-bestowed the certificate upon the honorees, presented them with gifts, and thanked them for choosing Aruba as their favorite vacation destination, as their

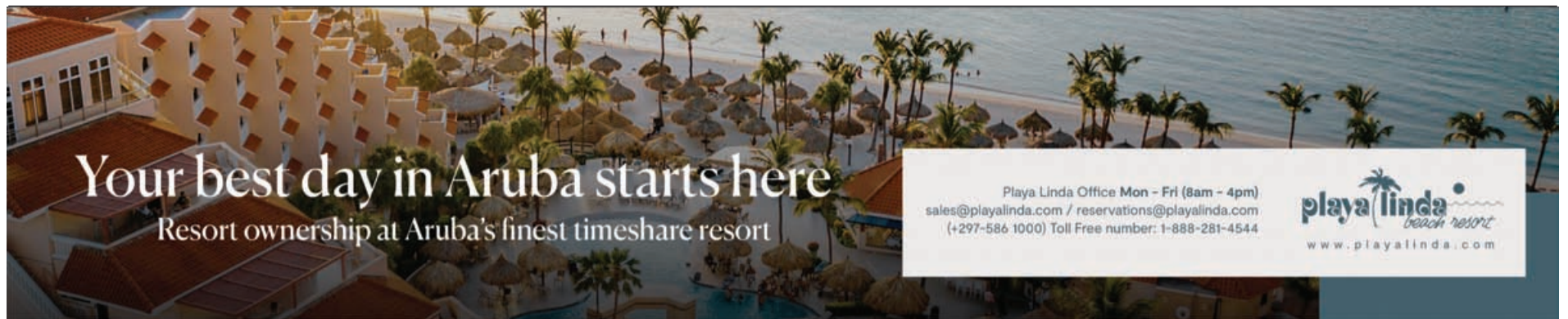
home away from home.

The top reasons for returning to Arubaprovided by the honorees were:

- Aruba's beautiful beaches
- Aruba's amazing sunsets
- "Swimming in the Sea"
- "The friendly Aruban people & wonderful staff at our resort"
- "Seeing old friends"
- "Shopping at Kays"

On behalf of the Aruba Tourism Authority, we would like to express our sincere gratitude and appreciation to the honorees for their continued visits to the "One Happy Island".





The 71st Carnaval season is in full swing!

(Oranjestad)—It's Aruba's favorite time of the year again, and locals are gearing up for the 71st edition of Carnaval starting this week. This upcoming Saturday, January 11th, Aruba will have its opening parade, welcoming the Carnaval season with the "Torch Parade" or known locally as, "Parada di Flambeu."

From January 11th to March 2nd there will be dozens of Carnaval activities that locals and visitors can enjoy, ranging from parades and music festivals to the annual coronation of Carnaval's "Prins y Pancho", Carnaval Queens and "Sra. Carnaval" (Mrs. Carnaval). The next two months will be jam-packed with events, and we wouldn't want you to miss out on the fun. To make sure you don't, here's the official schedule for this year's Carnaval program, provided by the official Carnaval organization, SMAC.

All parades are free for anyone to enjoy. However, some music festivals and carnaval competitions may require you to purchase a ticket to attend. For any questions or concerns about upcoming carnaval events, please e-mail us at news@arubatoday.com, or visit SMAC's official Facebook page. □

CARNIVAL 71 ISLA DI CARNIVAL			ACTIVIDADNAN DI SMAC 2025		
11 NOV 11/11 Carnival Opening 10 AM-12 PM	11 JAN Parada di Flambeu 8 PM-3 AM	12 JAN Eleccion di Prins cu Pancho 6:30-11:30 PM	17 JAN Calypso y Roadmarch Infantil Hubenil 6:30-11 PM	18 JAN Eleccion di Reina Infantil-Hubenil 6:30-11 PM	19 JAN Eleccion di Reina Grandi y Sra. Carnaval 6:30-11 PM
25 JAN Dia di Betico	31 JAN Festival di Tumba Infantil-Hubenil 6:30-10 PM	1 FEB Festival di Tumba Aruba 53 8 PM-3 AM	2 FEB Parada di Fantasia 2-6 PM	7 FEB Caiso & Soca Monarch	8 FEB Caiso & Soca Monarch
14 FEB Mascarade Parade Savaneta 8 PM	14 FEB Pre Jouve Events	15 FEB Jouvert Morning 3-10 AM	16 FEB Traspaso di Mando 10 AM-12 PM	16 FEB Parada di Mucha Oranjestad 1-6 PM	19 FEB North in'l Sunset Parade 7 PM-1 AM
21 FEB Parada Escolar Scolnan Pre-paratorio y Basico Oranjestad 10 AM-12 PM	22 FEB Parada di Mucha Noord 2-6 PM	22 FEB Aruba's Lighting Parade 8 PM-3 AM	23 FEB Parada di Mucha San Nicolas 1-6 PM	23 FEB Momito 7-9 PM	27 FEB Parada di Luz 8 PM-2 AM
28 FEB Parada Escolar Scolnan Avansa San Nicolas 10 AM-1 PM	28 FEB Parada Escolar Scolnan Avansa Oranjestad 10 AM-1:30 PM	1 MAR Parada Grandi San Nicolas 11 AM-7 PM	2 MAR Parada Grandi Oranjestad 11 AM-7 PM	2 MAR Momo 7-10 PM	

Aruban legends: Frenchman's Pass

(Oranjestad)—If you ever plan on taking a group tour of the island, you may pass through the Frenchman's Pass in Balashi. The Frenchman's pass (known to locals as "Franse Pas") remains a mysterious—and spooky—road of which its legend is told from generation to generation.

The history of the Frenchman's pass—and how it got its name—dates back to the colonization era, when the French tried to colonize the island, but were met with an angry mob of indigenous settlers, refusing to give up their land. However, as the French were heavily equipped with fire arms, the indigenous settlers began to retreat, and hid away in nearby caves.

The French colonizers tried to smoke them out of the caves, but the indigenous settlers ended up inhaling too much smoke and most died in those caves. From then on, this passage was known as Frenchman's Pass, and there have been many accounts of spirits roaming the area of Spanish Lagoon.

There are many ghost stories surrounding this area, but one of the most famous one involves a lonely hitchhiker, trying to find a ride back home in the dark rainy night.

Sometime after trying to hitchhike, the man saw a car approaching, appearing almost ghost-like in the rain. However, since he

needed a ride real bad, he didn't think twice and jumped in. But to his horror, he noticed that there was no driver in the front. Paralyzed with fear, he didn't dare to get out, and the car started to move.

When approaching a sharp turn, the hitch hiker braced for impact, but just when he thought the car might drive straight off the road and crash, he saw a hand appear out the window and turn the wheel. For the next few turns, the hand appeared again. After having had enough, the man decided to jump out and he ran to Santa Cruz.

Arriving at a nearby bar, he ordered a drink and began to tell everyone about his



experience. Everyone grew quiet, because they realized he wasn't some drunk messing around; he was telling the truth.

Sometime later, two men walked into the bar and one of them noticed the hitchhiker. He called out to his buddy and said: "Look, there's the idiot who sat in our car when we were pushing it!"

French man's pass is one of the few sites on the island that keeps the locals on their toes. While most ghost stories may not have real grounds—or some may even be a set up story for a joke, this pass contributes a lot to our culture of folkloric story-telling. □

Source: visitaruba.com

Classifieds

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Divi Village

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Building D
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Divi Village

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Building D 1 st floor
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Room # 2118 birdie 3
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One bedroom week 52 room
953 One bedroom week 01
room # 654
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#672
Contract expire :31 st December
2047
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2025
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Ground floor garden / ocean
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ary 2025
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Divi village golf

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Divi Village golf

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Room # 2258 Birdie 10
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contract Price : \$ 12,000
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One Bedroom Week # 3
Room # 2318 \$ 9000
Studio WK # 3
room # 2317 \$8000
Both units :\$16,000
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Contract expire :12/31/2045
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Divi Village Golf

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Studio week 5,6,7,8,9
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contract
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San Nicolas:

Seroe Preto:Tel.584 4833

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Noord	527 3200
Sta. Cruz	527 2900
San Nicolas	584 5000
Police Tipline	11141
Ambulancia	911
Fire Dept.	115
Red Cross	582 2219

TAXI SERVICES

Taxi Tas	587 5900
Prof. Taxi	588 0035
Taxi D.T.S.	587 2300
Taxi Serv. Aruba	583 3232
A1 Taxi Serv.	280 2828

TRAVEL INFO

Aruba Airport	524 2424
American Airlines	582 2700
Avianca	588 0059
Jet Blue	588 2244
Surinam	582 7896

AID FOUNDATIONS

Aruba Food Bank
Tel. 588 0002
FAVI- Visually Impaired
Tel. 582 5051
Alcoholics Anonymous
Tel. 736 2952
Narcotics Anonymous
Tel. 583 8989
Fundacion Contra Violencia
Relacional Tel. 583 5400
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2 Bed Ocean view \$22,500
2 Bed Garden view \$18,500
3 Bed Ocean view \$36,000
2 Bed WK 51 Ocean view \$65,500
2 Bed WK 52 Ocean View \$65,500
2 Bed WK 7 and 14 - all views

GOLD SEASON

2 Bed Oceanfront \$20,000
2 Bed Oceanside \$15,500
2 Bed Ocean view \$14,500
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Eagles sit Barkley in season finale and end chance at NFL rushing record

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — Saquon Barkley was inactive Sunday for the Philadelphia Eagles, denying the running back his chance at breaking Eric Dickerson's NFL single-season rushing record.

Jalen Hurts, wide receivers A.J. Brown and DeVonta Smith and offensive linemen Landon Dickerson and Lane Johnson were among the starters who sat out for the NFC East champion Eagles against the New York Giants.

The Eagles are set to host an NFC wild-card game next weekend and didn't want to risk injury to any key players as they prepare for the postseason. Barkley finished the season with 2,005 yards. □



Philadelphia Eagles running back Saquon Barkley, center, leaps as Dallas Cowboys linebacker Marist Liufau tries to trip him up during the second half of an NFL football game, Sunday, Dec. 29, 2024, in Philadelphia.

Associated Press

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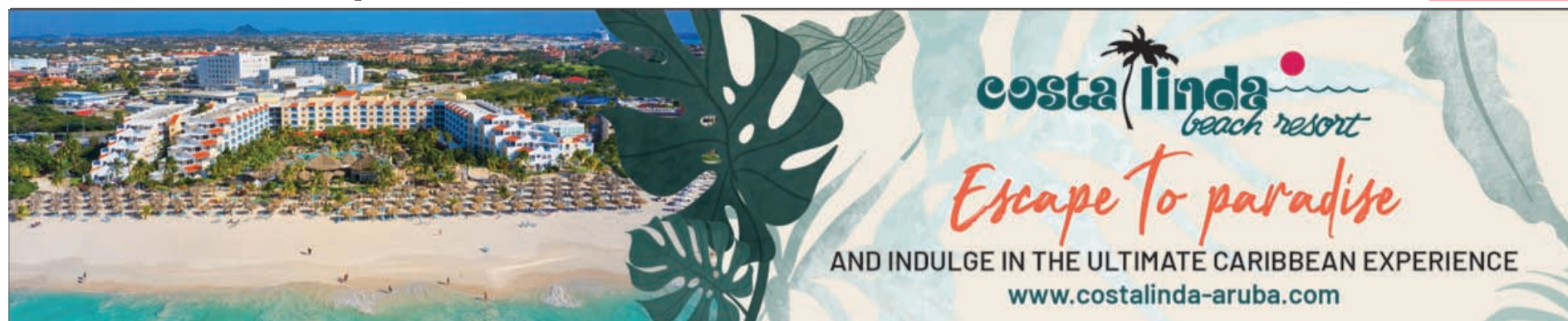
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Mike Evans reaches 1,000 yards receiving and Buccaneers clinch NFC South with win over Saints

By The Associated Press

TAMPA, Fla. (AP) — Baker Mayfield used his legs and arm to help the Tampa Bay Buccaneers clinch their fourth straight NFC South title while putting Mike Evans over 1,000 yards receiving. Mayfield fired a 32-yard touchdown pass to Jalen McMillan for the go-ahead score and then scrambled 28 yards for a crucial first down on the next drive, leading the Buccaneers to a 27-19 victory over the New Orleans Saints on Sunday.

Evans caught a 9-yard pass on the final play of the game to surpass 1,000 yards for the 11th straight season, tying Jerry Rice for the most in NFL history. After Mayfield's long scramble on third-and-14 from the Tampa 12, the Buccaneers drove to the Saints 11. Mayfield looked for Evans but flipped the ball backward to Bucky Irving, who ran 11 yards for a TD that made it 27-19.

The Saints turned the ball over on downs and the Buccaneers got one more chance to get Evans the milestone.

BEARS 24, PACKERS 22

GREEN BAY, Wis. (AP) — Caleb Williams drove Chicago to Cairo Santos' 51-yard field goal as time expired and the Bears snapped a 10-game skid with a victory over playoff-bound Green Bay, who lost quarterback Jordan Love and wide receiver Christian Watson to injuries.

Green Bay coach Matt LaFleur said Love was held out as a precaution. The QB had some practice tosses on the sideline late in the game.

The Bears (5-12) beat the Packers for the first time since 2018 and ended an



Tampa Bay Buccaneers wide receiver Mike Evans (13) is brought down by New Orleans Saints safety Jordan Howden (31) during the first half of an NFL football game Sunday, Jan. 5, 2025, in Tampa, Fla. Associated Press

11-game losing streak in this rivalry. It was redemption for Santos, who had a 46-yard field goal blocked by Karl Brooks on the final play of a 20-19 loss to the Packers on Nov. 17.

Brandon McManus had put Green Bay ahead by making a 55-yard field goal with 54 seconds left. Williams got the Bears into field-goal range by throwing an 18-yard completion to DJ Moore, whose fumble had set up the McManus kick.

Green Bay (11-6) is the No. 7 seed in the NFC playoffs and will play at Philadelphia in the wild-card round.

EAGLES 20, GIANTS 13

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — Tanner McKee threw for 269 yards and two touchdowns in a game full of backups to help Philadelphia tune up for the postseason with a victory over New York.

The NFC East champion Eagles (14-3) are the No. 2 seed in the conference and will host Green Bay next weekend in a wild-card game.

With making a run at the

Super Bowl a priority, the Eagles rested their core starters, notably running back Saquon Barkley, quarterback Jalen Hurts, wide receivers A.J. Brown and DeVonta Smith and offensive linemen Landon Dickerson and Lane Johnson. Barkley lost his shot at breaking Eric Dickerson's NFL single-season rushing record. Barkley finished the season with 2,005 yards rushing, 101 yards shy of breaking Dickerson's record of 2,105 yards set with the Los Angeles Rams in 1984.

TEXANS 23, TITANS 14

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP) — C.J. Stroud completed all six of his passes for 50 yards and a touchdown Sunday on the Texans' opening drive before going to the bench as Houston snapped a two-game skid going into the AFC playoffs with a victory over Tennessee.

The Texans (10-7) also avoided being swept by the team they replaced in Houston. The Texans won for the first time since clinching their second straight AFC

South title Dec. 15 with a win over Miami.

Now Houston waits to see if the Texans are hosting either the Los Angeles Chargers, who played at the Raiders later Sunday, or Pittsburgh in an AFC wild-card game.

With the loss combined with New England's win over Buffalo, the Titans' season of misery at least landed them the No. 1 pick overall in the NFL draft in April. Their 3-14 finish matches 2014 for the most losses in a season since relocating from Texas to Tennessee in 1997.

COMMANDERS 23, COWBOYS 19

ARLINGTON, Texas (AP) — Marcus Mariota threw a 5-yard touchdown pass to Terry McLaurin with 3 seconds left, lifting Washington to a victory over Dallas and clinching the sixth seed in the NFC playoffs for the Commanders.

Mariota threw for two scores and ran for a TD after replacing Jayden Daniels. The Commanders (12-5) sat their dynamic rookie

quarterback at halftime since playoff seeding was the only thing on the line, and the move ended up sparking an offense that produced just 64 yards before the break.

It turned out Washington didn't need the rally to keep the sixth seed because Green Bay lost to Chicago on a late field goal.

The Commanders will visit either Tampa Bay or the Los Angeles Rams in the wild-card round next weekend. The Packers will visit NFC East champion Philadelphia, the No. 2 seed, in the wild-card round.

PATRIOTS 23, BILLS 16

FOXBOROUGH, Mass. (AP) — Joe Milton III passed for a touchdown and ran for another in his NFL debut, and New England Patriots cost themselves the No. 1 overall pick in the NFL draft with a win over AFC East champion Buffalo.

The Patriots (4-13) snapped a six-game skid when a loss would have guaranteed them the top draft pick. Instead, they fell to No. 4 behind Tennessee, Cleveland and the New York Giants. Milton finished 22 of 29 for 241 yards in relief of rookie Drake Maye, who played only one series. Kayshon Boutte had seven catches for 117 yards and TD, and Joey Slye kicked three field goals.

With coach Jerod Mayo's future in question, he ended up playing some starters and resting others.

PANTHERS 44, FALCONS 38, OT

ATLANTA (AP) — Bryce Young passed for three touchdowns, ran for two scores and led a 70-yard drive capped by Miles Sanders' 1-yard TD run on the opening possession. □